Development (NABARD) under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF). NABARD provides financial assistance to State Governments under RIDF for undertaking rural infrastructure projects in the respective States. During the year 2000-2001 and 2001 -2002, NABARD has sanctioned Rs. 4632.67 crores and Rs. 1048.38 crores respectively to various States under RIDF-VI and RIDF-VII towards creation of infrastructure in various sectors -*viz.* irrigation, roads and bridges, mini-hydel, rural water supply, soil moisture, conservation, watershed development, primary school building, rural markets, flood protection and drainage, information technology and system improvement projects.

Compensation for Extra Work in Bank

3939. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a charter of demands has been submitted by the prominent Bank Officers' Unions to the Indian Bank Association asking for compensation for extra work currently being carried out by the officers due to enormous rise in the work load due to shortage of staff consequent to VRS in the banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken towards the demands made by the Unions?

'THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Re-activation of Gold Deposit Scheme

3940. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Gold Deposit Scheme comes a cropper" which appeared in the Newstime dated 29th July, 2001;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether the reasons for the failure of the scheme have been inquired

into and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government would like to take some positive steps to reactivate the scheme; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The Scheme is still in its initial stages. As it is a new activity for banks, they require time to develop necessary systems and strategies for marketing the scheme. The Reserve Bank of India has directed banks to give more publicity to the scheme. Government has exempted the transfer of gold certificates from payment of stamp duty.

Higher rate of interest on Small Saving Schemes

3941. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Senior Citizens let down by postal department" appearing in the Times of India dated 3rd August, 2001;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the reasons for not allowing a higher rate of interest on small savings to the senior citizens on their investment on the lines of Reserve Bank's policy to grant similar concession to them; and

(d) whether a similar concession is proposed to be announced to the senior citizens and if not, the reasons therefor?'

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The rates of interest on various small savings schemes have been rationalised by the Government as the real rates of interest on these schemes were considered to be high preventing downward movement of other rates of interest in the economy. This decision has been taken in the larger interest of the economy and will benefit all sections of the Society. There is no proposal to offer higher rates of interest to senior citizens.

Payment of Salaries to Employees of Manipur

3942. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased